# Julius Evola’s Concept of the Differentiated Man

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Dedicated to Julius Evola.

# Table of Contents

Are You the Differentiated Man?.....3

End of the Cycle – Differentiated Man's Environment.....11

Anti-Bourgeois Attitude – No Coping Allowed.....20

Differentiated Man – Structure of the Self.....31

Nietzsche's Pseudosolution.....43

Existentialism – Philosophy of Crisis.....49

Neospiritualism – Fissures in the Great Wall.....55

Fear of Death – Beyond Current Earthly Existence.....63

# Are You the Differentiated Man?

One way of looking at Julius Evola's book Ride the Tiger is as his attempt to conceptualize a specific kind of man which he calls "differentiated man". The idea of "riding the tiger" in its general form seems straightforward, but the concept of the differentiated man is full of very tricky aspects. It is very easy to cope even with the idea of "ride the tiger" which is at its basis oriented against all coping. Intellectually it is clear that if what one is opposing is too strong, one cannot confront it directly, but details of this approach are much harder to define. Although Evola's concept of the differentiated man has individual dimension in that due to explosion of individuality in the world in dissolution it is not possible to define typical behavior for larger groups of men, there are many aspects of this concept which are clearly defined in a typically Evolian style where his mathematical and engineering talents shine.

In Ride the Tiger Evola roughly divided men living in the world in dissolution in several categories. The majority is passively coping with the remnants of the bourgeois world, which for many decades means consumer-bourgeois world. Smaller number of men feel the effects of dissolution in their existential reality, but are rebelling without a cause which leads them either to coping of the first group or to the collapse due to inability to handle high level of nihilism. Even smaller number are dealing with the world in dissolution actively. These men match the concept of the differentiated man. They acknowledged the state of zero point of values reached by the

bourgeois world long time ago, but unlike the second group can transform the poison of this radically nihilistic climate into medicine. What enables those men to operate that way is their inborn ability of transcendence, a feature which differentiates them from most of their contemporaries. In Ride the Tiger Evola writes:

> *… essential thing is that such a man is characterized by an existential dimension not present in the predominant human type of recent times – that is, the dimension of transcendence.*

Evola goes even as far as considering these men as men of a different race than those which predominate at the very end of the cycle. Here it should be noted that the term "race" should be understood in the context of Evola's racial doctrine, not in the context of typical biological reductionism. These men are able to maintain dual nature, one individual and the other supra-individual which allows them to simultaneously live in this world, but not be of this world. They can be considered late children of Tradition whose real fatherland is situated somewhere in the world of Tradition. They cannot view themselves "inside" the society, which might even put them in the category of outcasts. They come from afar into this world, are involved in it, but stay untouched by it. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *In contrast, there is a different and much smaller category of modern men who, instead of submitting to the nihilistic processes, seek to accept them actively. In particular, there are those who not only admit that the processes of dissolution are*

*irreversible and there is no going back, but who would not want to follow that path even if it existed.*

He even speculates on the idea that groups of differentiated men could have a significant role in renewing the idea of Orders which had significant role in many upward civilizational cycles, including that of the Romano-Germanic cycle. In Ride the Tiger he writes:

*… the only prospect is that of an invisible unit, in a world without frontiers, of those few individuals who are associated by their very nature, which is different from that of the man of today … A similar, dematerialized type of unity and state was at the basis of the Orders, … If new processes are to develop when the present cycle exhausts itself, perhaps they could have their point of departure in this very kind of unity.*

It can be speculated that Evola invented the concept of the differentiated man in order to partly solve the problem of continuation of cycles. Traditional teachings roughly suggest that when one cycle ends, the other one starts anew, so if the end of the cycle represents true zero point of values, how can something be created out of nothing on that zero point? Maybe differentiated men can act as a bridge between cycles, although Evola does not encourage coping with waiting for "the end of the world" as the solution to the existential problem of the differentiated man. In Ride the Tiger he writes:

*When one cycle closes, another begins, and the point at which a given process reaches its extreme is also the point at*

*which it turns in the opposite direction. But there is still the problem of continuity between the two cycles. To use an image from Hoffmansthal, the positive solution would be that of a meeting between those who have been able to stay through the long night, and those who may appear the next morning.*

Differentiated man's path is a left-hand path of riding the tiger. Evola mixes into his concept many ideas from the world of Tradition, as he usually does, in order to conceptually define this kind of man, which gives this concept higher significance, and although this man is a modern man, frees it from typically modern arbitrariness. This kind of man appears at the end of each cycle which gives him perennial significance.

Although Evola in his book Ride the Tiger makes sure to define the differentiated man as truly differentiated and special kind of man, after his book was published in 1960s, he noticed that this was often not taken into account or is misinterpreted. This concept does not apply to angry young men who are rebelling against something, although they might even be grounded in some solid ideas. Differentiated man is a man with high degree of maturity in surviving with no or minimal external support in the world left to itself, and in various trials of self-knowledge. In his essay from 1968 The Youth, the Beats, and Right-Wing Anarchists he writes:

*My book Ride the Tiger, which has been described as a 'manual for the Right-wing anarchist', only partially solves this problem, since it is essentially addressed to a specific differentiated type, with a high level of maturity – something*

*which people have failed to observe all too often. So the guidelines provided in this book are not always suitable for the category of young people I have just mentioned.*

Evola in his book Ride the Tiger tries very hard to keep definition of the differentiated man as general as possible, but without losing on concreteness when it is needed. This kind of definition can be viewed as a specification which can have many different implementations, so although many men reading the book can imagine themselves as differentiated men, there is no way to prove that intellectually. This book makes sense only to those men who have significant prior experience in ways of survival related to “ride the tiger” approach, and have already tried to conceptualize their approach. Evola in this context has a role of a man with similar experiences who broadens horizons and provides grounding in traditional teachings.

Given that Evola used “ride the tiger” approach in his own life and that it seems that his path in that direction started with deep existential crisis after First World War, it is possible that this approach makes sense only to those who had similar experiences. In any case, his book Ride the Tiger has deep existential and personal dimension and in that way differs from most of his other books. In The Path of Cinnabar Evola writes:

*In many ways, Ride the Tiger reflects the path that I have chosen for myself: for the indications and guidelines suggested in the book are those which I have sought to apply in the course of my own life. This, however, does not bestow a merely subjective and private character on Ride the Tiger, as if*

*it were a kind of spiritual testament; on the contrary, I believe that the problems and experiences that have marked my own life reflect and contribute to define typical features of individual existence in the contemporary world.*

Readers of his books should always be careful in identifying themselves with Evola given that he is a man, although in many ways modern and therefore similar to men of today, of very differentiated kind. His background, which he fully rejected in his youth, is a serious bourgeois world of early 20th century Italy, a world very different from today's consumer-bourgeois world. No matter how radical his readers are, Evola probably lived more radical life than them. In order to know Evola as the "differentiated man" and Evola in many phases of his career, which are in some cases contradictory and not fully consistent, the best book to read is The Path of Cinnabar, his intellectual autobiography. Reading this book before any other book is the best way to avoid misunderstandings and to read what fits the nature of the reader, and in a proper way.

Evola in several cases uses the term "man of Tradition" in order to assign a very noble-sounding property to the differentiated man. He defined the "world of Tradition" in some other of his books, so this might be the reason why he does not go into details in defining what he exactly means by "man of Tradition" in his book Ride the Tiger. It is clear that differentiated man's Self matches the structure of the Self of the man of Tradition in that it has the ability of transcendence, which allows him to keep a distance from various destructions

of the bourgeois world, the antithesis of the world of Tradition. Evola is very realistic on the ability of the differentiated man to fully transcend limitations of the world left to itself. Ideas like the one which suggests unfortunate subtitle of Ride the Tiger which was published in early 2000s, "survival manual for aristocrats of the soul", should be avoided. The differentiated man is neither priest nor warrior nor aristocrat of the old world. In Ride the Tiger Evola writes:

> *One cannot ignore everything that modern progress and culture have created, and that is now established fact in modern man's makeup, largely neutralizing the faculties necessary for an effective "opening" of the experience of things and beings – an opening that has nothing to do with the philosophical lubrications of today's phenomenologists.*

Although Evola had many phases in his 40 years long writing career, it is clear that he ended his career with the "ride the tiger" phase, considering this approach the only existentially relevant approach after all possibilities for direct action disappeared at the end of the Second World War. Given the acceleration of dissolution he noticed after the war, he considered most of his other books as being valuable primarily for the broadening of reader's intellectual horizons, especially those which are dealing with inner doctrines. In The Path of Cinnabar he writes:

> *On the other hand, if we turn from doctrine to practice, I believe that the only reasonable (yet rather important) aims that can be accomplished today concern the strengthening of*

*one's character. … What is more difficult is to discipline oneself: to adopt a firm line of conduct in everyday life. In this respect, I believe that what I have written in Ride the Tiger, and partly in The Bow and the Club, can prove useful.*

It is generally very easy, given the generality of the concept of the differentiated man, to lower the bar and treat every form of non-conformism as "riding the tiger". It is very easy to be "differentiated" living in the greatest Bubble in history, but as the consumer-bourgeois cycle is ending, many will have opportunity to existentially prove do they really match the concept of the differentiated man. In the context of the bursting of Everything Bubble, the possible end of Kali Yuga and the Great Reset, this concept might prove to be not just interesting but also useful from the perspective of survival, both physical and metaphysical.

# End of the Cycle – Differentiated Man's Environment

The environment which the differentiated man lives in is the environment of the end of the cycle. For Evola in his book Ride the Tiger this is primarily the end of the last Western cycle, although as Guenon suggested, this could also be considered the end of the Kali Yuga. For differentiated men living in American anti-empire end of the cycle could also signify the end of the consumer-bourgeois cycle which started in the 1970s. It is the world left to itself, populated by last men, which gods withdrew from, blinding those whom they wish to ruin. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *Man, at a given moment, wanted to 'be free'. He was allowed to be so, and he was allowed to throw the chains that did not bind him so much as sustain him. Thereupon he was allowed to suffer all the consequences of his liberation, following ineluctably up to his present state in which 'God is dead' (or 'God has withdrawn,' as Bernanos says), and existence becomes the field of absurdity where everything is possible and everything is allowed.*

He also adds:

> *The significance of all the crises of recent times can be summarized as follows: a man wanted to be free, for whom a life of freedom could spell only ruin. To say "God is dead" is only an emotional way of stating the basic fact of the epoch.*

Although Evola's approach of "riding the tiger" can be considered seriously nihilistic, he tries to undramatize the situation by providing the larger picture of the root causes of the dissolution. For the last Western cycle dissolution seriously accelerated during the bourgeois era, so this dissolution is a process which lasts for hundreds of years. It is this world which is in crisis, not the world of Tradition, a fact which is often not recognized by those who confuse the two. Even though most of the dissolution already occurred and therefore current situation cannot be described in any other way than helpless, one should not cope with the salvation of the coming new Golden Age nor with resignation.

Since Evola's time of both pre and post Second World War world many collapses happened in an accelerated way, inevitably leading to the current polycrisis of 2020s. Therefore, one should be careful in reading Evola's remarks on the period which immediately followed Second World War because this period could be from the static conservative perspective viewed as the "golden age". Evola during his time needed much more subtlety to notice dissolution in that world, than is needed by men living in today's world. On the other hand, the world is for the last several decades trapped in the biggest Bubble in history, so this can contribute to inability to see the obvious.

Most individuals living at the end of the cycle are here to end that cycle. They should, being left to their own devices, but allowed to be free, make a lot of unfixable mistakes, which should eventually lead to the avalanche hitting the valley, to use

Evola's metaphor for the very end of the cycle. Differentiated man should be one of those who is able to with his positive nihilism keep differentiated attitude in an environment of pure contingency. It could be that there exist real traditional forces, remnants of nobility of earlier phases of the cycle, but it is difficult to count of them taking over at the very end of the cycle given the situation which is dominated by the full triumph of the anti-traditional forces. Evola writes in The Path of Cinnabar:

> *Burckhardt also mentioned the existence of "spiritual influences that, albeit often invisible, by far surpass all of the material powers of humanity", and which are exercised by surviving "initiatory" centers. While stressing the fact that I do not deny the possibility that similar influences might exist, I remarked that it is likely that those centers capable of exerting them might have received the order not to do so, in such a way as to not interfere with the general process of devolution.*

The environment of the end of the cycle is being shaped for many centuries by many revolutions from bellow, which many ancestors of last men living today directly participated in, including those of the differentiated man. In the context of the last Western cycle every revolution operated on lower level than the previous one. Revolution of the Third Estate lead to the revolution of the Forth Estate, which lead to something which could even be considered as the revolution of the Fifth Estate. This process is that of the logarithmic decay where the amount of traditional structures left to fall decreases exponentially,

eventually leading to the sudden collapse at the very end. Evola in Ride the Tiger writes:

> *The "immortal principles" of 1789 and the rights of equality granted by absolute democracy to the atomized individual regardless of qualification or rank, and the irruption of the masses into the political structure, have effectively brought about what Walther Rathenau calls a "vertical invasion by barbarians from bellow". Consequently, the following observation of essayist Ortega y Gasset remains true: "The characteristic fact of the moment is that the mediocre soul recognizing itself as mediocre, has the audacity to assert the right of mediocrity and impose it everywhere."*

End of the cycle and final collapse of the bourgeois world could be regarded as the proof of the illusory nature of the apparent total triumph of anti-traditional forces. Whoever will exist in the next upward cycle will have enough evidence that anti-tradition, although attractive, especially to men who contain a lot of non-Aryan racial elements, is simply dysfunctional and it cannot be made to work despite all coping done by billions of peasants worldwide. Evola in Ride the Tiger writes:

> *When a cycle of civilization is reaching its end, it is difficult to achieve anything by resisting it and by directly opposing the forces in motion. The current is too strong: one would be overwhelmed. The essential thing is not to let oneself be impressed by the omnipotence and apparent triumph of the*

*forces of the epoch. These forces, devoid of connection with any higher principle, are in fact on a short chain.*

There is a tendency to imagine the end of the cycle being accompanied by some kind of apocalyptic nuclear conflict or other kinds of events which involve many explosions. Although this might be one aspect of "the end", there might be many more implosions which occur in the next phase of gynocracy which the West and increasingly the rest of the world finds itself in. Given the feminine energy which predominates at the end of the cycle and which is fundamentally passive, "the end" might happen without anybody really noticing anything. This "end" might have already occurred, including the end of the Kali Yuga, which Guenon predicted will end in 1999.

There is a lot of evidence that the end of the current consumer-bourgeois cycle will be coordinated on the global scale. The idea of Great Reset is focused on finding new narratives for the global unsustainable consumer-oriented gynocracy. These new narratives can only be gynocratic in nature given racial degeneration of races which were or were influenced by Aryo-Roman and Aryo-Germanic races, and given the exponential spread of non-white non-Aryan races. Can small minority of differentiated men represent a force which will start a new cycle in upward direction is left to be seen. Total material and non-material bankruptcy of worldwide consumer bourgeoisie simply does not allow for consumer-bourgeois cycle to continue for much longer. In this context some kind of apocalyptic scenarios might even have a positive effect of

forcing differentiated, and maybe even the rest of men, to wake up. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *I truly cannot say what the person who still has hope for man should think of the imminence of quasi-apocalyptic destruction. It would certainly force many to face the existential problem in all its nakedness, and subject them to extreme trials; but is this a worse evil than that of mankind's safe, secure, satisfied, and total consignment to the kind of happiness that befits Nietzsche's "last man" ...*

Differentiated man should be able to handle even the extreme trials of the modern warfare with it's usage of weapons of mass destruction and technology which turns against men. Evola this scenario considers the ultimate case of riding the tiger. The challenge for the differentiated man in general terms should be no different than any other challenge he faces in banal affairs of the bourgeois world. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *What is important here is a natural union of life with risk, beyond the instinct of self-preservation, including situations in which one's own physical destruction is parallel to the attainment of the absolute sense of existence, and actualizes the "absolute person". We might call this the ultimate case of "riding the tiger".*

Every event in differentiated man's life should be approached in the differentiated way, which primarily depends on transcendent dimension of the Self being active. Given that this

man is surrounded by his contemporaries who consider this age as the “golden age” due to misinterpretation of triumphs of anti-traditional forces in the material domain, this gap in perspectives is challenging enough for the differentiated man, so there is no need for him to wait for extraordinary events to take place, so that he can prove his differentiation.

There existed those who in Evola’s time considered the East as the source of support in terms of the remnants of the traditional order. Today some are coping with related ideas on a yet lower level, by thinking that balkanization of global American anti-empire can automatically lead to instantiation of various poles which are falsely assumed to be “traditional” or having “traditional” aspects which will start to shine when they separate themselves from the Collective West and America in particular. Just like Evola rejected “the myth of the East” in his time, ideas of Multipolarity should be regarded as pure intellectual masturbation. The East has been following the path of the West for many decades, if not centuries, so it could be that the West will be the first to reach the point of the end of the cycle and therefore first to start a new one, while the rest of the world might be still coping with their anti-traditional ideas they duplicated from the West. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *Outside of circles of scholars and specialists in metaphysical disciplines, the “myth of the East” is therefore a fallacy. “The desert encroaches”: there is no other civilization that can serve as support; we have to face our problems alone. … The West, having reached the point beyond the negative limit, would be*

*qualified to assume a new function of guidance or command, very different from the material, techno-industrial leadership that it wielded in the past, which, once it collapsed, resulted only in a general leveling.*

It is clear that in most cases differentiated man in this environment cannot match the results of great men and probably not even common men of the past who lived in a more traditionally ordered world. This man will fail in many of his actions, and some of these failures might even turn out to be fatal. There is nothing that is not risky for this kind of men living in the world left to itself, which also applies to his contemporaries, with the difference that they are not aware of it. If he avoids fatalism, this man has nothing to lose in his uncompromising attempt to maintain the differentiated attitude in living in nihilistic nothingness that is the modern world. From the metaphysical perspective it could be that these challenges were wished by him in the pretemporal domain in order to prove his real strength. If he succeeds his actions might have greater significance than accomplishments of great men living in a world of Tradition. Evola concludes his Revolt Against the Modern World with a similar idea:

*Before the vision of the Iron Age, Hesiod exclaimed: "May I have not been born in it!" But Hesiod, after all, was a Pelasgic spirit, unaware of higher vocation. For other natures there is a different truth; to them applies the teaching that was also known in the East: although the Kali Yuga is an age of great destructions, those who live during it and manage to remain*

*standing may achieve fruits that were not easily achieved by men living in other ages.*

# Anti-Bourgeois Attitude – No Coping Allowed

One of the main features of Julius Evola's work is his radically anti-bourgeois attitude. Since his days as a Dadaist painter and poet, until the very end of his career when he developed a concept of the differentiated man, he tried to show that bourgeois world does not work, although it pretends to, and that the world of Tradition represents the superior conception of Reality. This attitude had both intellectual and existential aspects because he tried to arrange his live in an anti-bourgeois way, rejecting a lot of bourgeois compromises. In Ride the Tiger one of his main aims is to point out that what's in crisis is the bourgeois world, the antithesis of the world of Tradition, not the world of Tradition. He writes:

> *… when crisis is mentioned today, what is meant is precisely the bourgeois world: it is the bases of bourgeois civilization and society that suffer these crises and are struck by dissolution. This is not what I call the world of Tradition.*

His concept of the differentiated man, although very general, has one broad but specific feature, and that is that it has nothing to do with the bourgeois world. Evola adds:

> *The human type I have in mind has nothing to do with the bourgeois world. He must consider everything bourgeois as being recent and antitraditional, born from processes that in themselves are negative and subversive.*

Differentiated man has to have inborn sensibility to differentiate between the bourgeois world and the world of Tradition, despite the fact that he lives in a world which long time ago cut all ties to the latter. In The Path of Cinnabar Evola writes:

> *What I regard as the most important thing in a person is his "existential reality": essentially, one must be radically anti-bourgeois and oppose all bourgeois compromises and conformity. … I shall wait and see how young people will turn out when they have passed the thirty mark. If, at that age, they have remained loyal to their ideals in all aspects of life, this will be the surest proof that their enthusiasm and interests – including those interests derived from the reading of "traditionalist" works – have deep roots.*

If differentiated man can existentially differentiate between anti-bourgeois attitude which comes from the Left and is oriented downward, and the one which comes from the traditional Right and is oriented upward, these Evola's hints can be used as guidelines for one's conduct on both individual and supra-individual level. Recent history has shown that anti-bourgeois attitude of Marxist realism is full of its own myths which after initial revolutionary tension weakened, were turned into bourgeois myths on yet lower level. In Ride the Tiger Evola writes:

> *… realism in question … in fact contain just as much "mythology" and mere social ideology as is found in those great despised words, written in capital letters, of bourgeois*

*idealism. Words of this kind are not eliminated from the underpinnings of the Marxist new realism, but are replaced by others of a still lower level ...*

In Men Among the Ruins he adds:

*As far as the present is concerned, with rare exceptions the average Italian communist is nothing but a bourgeois who takes to the streets (Lenin himself said that a proletarian, left to himself, tends to become a bourgeois), just as a false Christian and a member of Christian Democratic Party represent nothing more than the bourgeoisie in the temple. Even those who call themselves monarchists can only conceive of a bourgeois king. The worst evil for Italy is the bourgeoisie: the bourgeois-priest, the bourgeois-"noble", the bourgeois-intellectual. This type is inconsistent, a substance without form, in which there is no "above" and no "bellow".*

Bourgeois way of survival can be regarded as kind of survival which is the most attractive to most men, especially those which are dominated by non-Aryan racial elements. Typical peasant of the last European cycle, when left to his own devices, without influences from above, from priestly and regal Aryan influences, almost certainly ends up as a bourgeois man. In addition to that, women have natural bourgeois tendencies, so generally when it starts, there is no way to stop rapid expansion of the bourgeois ways of living. This can be proved by the fact that all revolutionary movements of the last several hundred years ended up creating their own version of the bourgeois world. When the bourgeois class expands to the extent that the whole

world can be considered bourgeois, then not just that nobody is bourgeois since everybody are, but that the world finds itself in state of total bankruptcy due to titanic tendencies of last men to create bourgeois paradise on Earth for all.

Almost total attachment to the current consumer-bourgeois world greatly contributes to the general undifferentiation in the political sphere. The Left and the Right have never been so unified in trying to preserve their attachments to this world. On the Right these attachments gave rise to ideas, like Archeofuturism, that one can renew the world of Tradition, but keep all the fruits of progress, which from the traditional perspective represents nothing but regress. These ideas both falsely assume that there exist a basis for any kind of renewal and that one can mix bourgeois world which created all the fruits of progress, with the world of Tradition. If the world of Tradition is implemented again it might not fully match implementations of previous traditional cycles, but it will certainly be based on typicality which has perennial significance. In the world of Tradition there roughly exist three typical kinds of men: priests, warriors and peasants. The way these men lived in all traditional cycles is roughly the same. There is no silver bullet – one can have this hard but realistic (in a higher sense), or unrealistic bourgeois way of survival, but not both.

Crucial aspect of the bourgeois world which makes it dysfunctional is lack of existentially relevant differentiation between men. Nihilism in this kind of world arises, not as many imagine, from the evildoings of “satanic” elites, but from

inability to resolve crucial question on which any non-trivial action depends: “why would I do what you tell me to do?”. Simultaneous asking of this question by millions of men worldwide creates a massive deadlock which is temporarily resolved by Ponzi schemes which give material goods (often worthless paper money confused with real money). But eventually this money runs out and the system becomes unsustainable. In this context Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *… what exists today is essentially the shifting mass of “individuals”, devoid of organic connections, a mass contained by external structures or moved by collective, formless and unstable currents. The differences between them, as they exist today, are no longer true differences. The classes are only fluid, economic classes. Again, the words of Zarathustra are timely: “Rabble above, rabble bellow! What do ‘poor’ or ‘rich’ mean today? I have forgotten how to tell the difference.”*

For Evola bourgeois world is a world of unrealism in a higher sense. This is a world of men who wanted to be free, were allowed to be free, but for whom freedom means only ruin. Given that it is not easy to face the reality in a higher sense, it is understandable that many men tried to escape harsh environment of the world of Tradition. It is this escapism which exists at the root of the bourgeois attitude. Evola in Revolt Against the Modern World writes about the earlier phase of the Romano-Germanic cycle:

> *Thus, such a state of affairs often resembled a state of war rather than that of a “society”; it was precisely because of this,*

*however, that a particular differentiation of energies occurred. Never has man been treated so harshly as in the feudal system, and yet not only for the feudal lords who had the responsibility of protecting their rights and honor, but also for the subjects this regime was a school of independence and of virility rather than of servility; in this regime the relationships of faithfulness and of honor played a larger role than in any other Western time period.*

Crucial part of this unrealism of the bourgeois world is its materialism which stems from inability of common humanity to deal with metaphysical laws which govern the Reality. Although bourgeoisie is often, and also in Evola's conception of castes or estates, positioned above slaves or in case of the last Western cycle peasants, most bourgeois men came from peasantry. Since this peasantry has deep non-Aryan roots, it is not surprising that left to their own devices these men turn materialism into a totalistic worldview. Cerebralization of men, which is characteristic of bourgeois era, is not so much a consequence of "intellectual" nature of these men, but failed attempts to outsmart the Reality by operating on the most basic level, that of materialism, which is completely unfit for dealing with any non-trivial problem.

Given that earlier phases of the last Western cycle were seriously anti-bourgeois in their attitude, differentiated man can maybe find some useful hints for his own differentiated approach of "riding the tiger" in ways of survival of priests and warriors of that old world. He should also not confuse his own

left-hand path in the antithesis of the world of Tradition with the right-hand path of nobility living in a world in which typically traditional ways of survival had external support in official institutions, customs and other surrounding structures. Evola in Ride the Tiger considers the idea of knight errant as potentially useful for the differentiated man:

> *There is a significant analogy with the idea of the medieval "knight errant", to which we might add the enigmatic and sometimes disconcerting figures of "noble travelers" whose homeland was unknown, who did not have one, or must not be asked about it. Although our case is different from that of ascetics who remove themselves from the world, the situation of the latest technological civilization might offer the incentives for commitments of this kind. In a large city, in mass society ... an essential sense of isolation or of detachment often occurs naturally, perhaps even more than in the solitude of moors and mountains.*

Differentiated man should implement his anti-bourgeois attitude in the context of the left-hand path of "ride the tiger". By negating the bourgeois world, which represents the negation of the world of Tradition, he should ideally come up with something positive. No or almost no coping with remnants of the remnants of the bourgeois world is allowed. This is a dangerous path which in its practical implementation can consider various trade-offs. From the perspective of the static conservative position differentiated man can therefore be viewed as a degenerate, even worse than many leftists who are

in their own way attached to the bourgeois world. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *The significance of the crises and the dissolutions that so many people deplore today should be stated, indicating the real and direct object of the destructive processes: bourgeois civilization and society. But measured against the traditional values, these latter were already the first negation of a world anterior and superior to them. Consequently the crisis of the modern world could represent, in Hegel's terms, a "negation of negation", so as to signify a phenomenon that, in its own way, is positive.*

Differentiated man can go very far in negating the bourgeois world, probably much farther than most rebels without the cause of the world, but he should not make this the real focus of his actions. He should instead try to turn the free space created by the dissolution of the bourgeois world into the opportunity to put to test and to activate those parts of his Self which are not tied to this world. Evola continues:

> *This double negation might end up in nothingness – in the nothingness that erupts in multiple forms of chaos, dispersion, rebellion, and "protest" that characterize many tendencies of recent generations; or in that other nothingness that is scarcely hidden behind the organized system of material civilization. Alternatively, for the men in question here it might create a new, free space that could eventually become the premise for a future, formative action.*

Evola in his book Ride the Tiger provides specific suggestions on what it means to “ride the tiger” in many aspects of life, which could form the basis of one’s anti-bourgeois attitude. This attitude should be based on the tendencies toward inner freedom, not on anti-conformism which in many cases leads to another kind of conformism. Since what’s collapsing is the bourgeois world, and specifically in the context of the polycrisis of the 2020s, the consumer-bourgeois world, there is also very practical aspect of anti-bourgeois attitude on the level of basic survival. If attachments to this world are minimized, one can be more prepared to survive, both physically and metaphysically, probably one of the biggest crises the world have ever seen – the end of the bourgeois era.

No coping is allowed in the field of politics. Those who cope with it are distracting themselves to death even more than soccer fans. Apoliteia is the only reasonable attitude for the differentiated man. No coping is also allowed with nationalism. It is the anti-traditional idea of the 19$^{th}$ century which collapsed when bourgeois world turned consumeristic and global. No coping is allowed with remnants of bourgeois art. This art is from the start “all too human” and became sub-human during the dissolution of the bourgeois world. Differentiated man can find some value in extreme forms of art which if done properly will lead to the self-dissolution of art as is conceived by the bourgeois world. No coping is allowed with remnants of the dominant religion, the Christianity. This religion is in deep crisis at least since Nietzsche’s nihilism and has become religion for women trying to find a boyfriend, older women and children not

yet struck by nihilism. In increasingly gynocratic world this religion can be considered one of the currents of neospiritualism. Neospiritualism is not the alternative to the dominant religion. These are failed attempts to resolve the question of meaning in the meaningless world. No coping is allowed with escaping the city life and returning to nature. Nature itself has no spiritual value. Both city and “nature” are for differentiated man part of nature in a higher sense, so he should be able to operate with no external support in both. No coping is allowed with failed attempts at spiritualization of modern science. Although scientific method has higher value, modern science in its materialism and attachments to practical applications is unable to deal with metaphysical reality, which makes it unrealistic in a higher sense. No coping is allowed with marriage and family. These are petit bourgeois structures which are most visibly struck by dissolution. What dominates in this context is tyranny of women and children which never grow up. Differentiated man should feel naturally distanced from both. There is no way he can maintain differentiated attitude while being married and having children. If he agrees with lost women of the world and therefore becomes attractive as a potential father of their children, he is probably doing something wrong. There is no need to fully isolate himself from women, but if he gets involved in relationships, they should be based on essential polarity between the sexes, stripped from most of the bourgeois super-structures. If he is concerned with leaving a legacy, he should do it through spiritual paternity, ignoring all coping with having children as a way of ensuring

that his differentiated attitude will be preserved in next generations.

# Differentiated Man – Structure of the Self

What makes Evola's differentiated man stand out from his contemporaries is the structure of his Self. In defining the concept of the differentiated man Julius Evola in his book Ride the Tiger pays special attention to this structure. He uses mostly consistent language in describing this Self throughout the book, although as he admits, struggles in some parts. In trying to avoid mostly confusing and inconsistent language of, especially modern philosophers, he does a good job, maybe also using his mathematical and engineering talents, in dealing with a set of complex processes which the Self is made of.

From the computational perspective, which can be used in absence of other alternatives, given the impotence of modern science in this area and vagueness of other disciplines, if individual's body is hardware, the Self is software. As Marvin Minsky, famous computer scientist said, "mind is what brain does". If this perspective is extended, with reservations that what one deals with is a very complex set of processes, conceptualization of the Self can be done from the computational perspective.

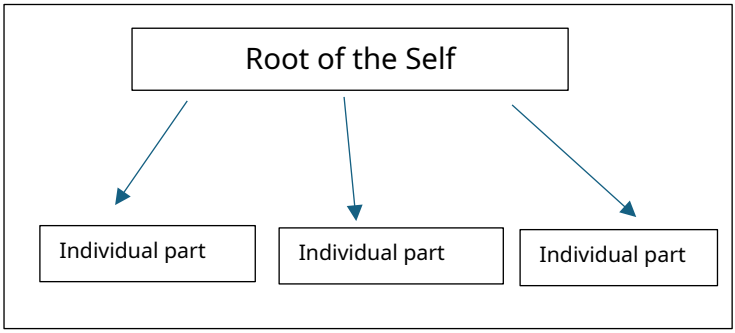
Crucial feature of differentiated man's Self is the dimension of transcendence. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *What is more, the essential thing is that such a man is characterized by an existential dimension not present in the*

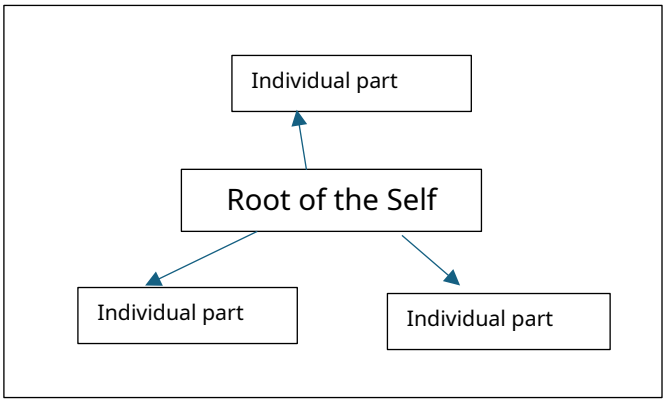
*predominant human type of recent times – that is, the dimension of transcendence.*

This Self is structured hierarchically in that some parts are subservient to others. On the hierarchically higher level, which Evola calls supra-individual, is situated the center or root of the Self. From the computational perspective this part can be called a “kernel”. This root of the Self represents what differentiated man is really about. It is a part which exists in pretemporal domain beyond current earthly existence and has the ability to stay untouched by all blows which the Self as a whole bears in the world in dissolution. It acts as a transformer of other parts of the Self which are situated on, what Evola calls individual level. Crucial feature or ability of the root of this Self is transcendence. It is the ability to update parts on the individual level, which can often involve destruction of those parts, while maintaining consistency and avoiding the crash of the Self as a whole.

Simple way of graphically conceptualizing the structure of this kind of Self from the perspective of hierarchy is the following:



and the following from the perspective of centrality:




Although Evola might not fully agree, abstractly speaking the Self is the machine, a very complex one. This perspective stands in opposition to almost all other perspectives which deal with the Self as a vague and indescribable object. From those latter perspectives every technical attempt at conceptualization of the Self is a disgrace and at best bad simplification. On the other hand, vagueness helps only those who write about it to appear much smarter than they really are. Evola in Ride the Tiger hints on the metaphysics of machine, which could be viewed even in attempts to view the Self as a machine, as positive aspect of the dissolution of arbitrariness of the bourgeois world:

*It is a matter of the general style of a new active realism that opens up pathways even in the midst of chaos and mediocrity. Among other things, the machine itself may appear as a symbol, and everything that has taken form in certain sectors of the modern world in terms of pure functionality, especially in architecture. The machine symbolizes a form born from an exact, objective adjustment of the means to the end, with the exclusion of everything superfluous, arbitrary, irrelevant, or subjective. … Some have spoken of a metaphysics of the machine, and of new archetypes heralded in the perfect functional forms of our time.*

This inborn structure of the Self is what really differentiates the differentiated man from his contemporaries. The Self of his contemporaries does not contain the root. In a more traditionally ordered world for most this root was provided externally by the traditional environment. It is no surprise therefore that when this environment weakened and eventually disappeared, most men are unable to be themselves. They are left to their own devices and in that state make a lot of huge mistakes. In that sense the whole world of anti-tradition can be considered an illusion because it is the product of these mistakes.

Evola needed this structure of the Self in order to find the solution for surviving in a world left to itself without external support or without coping with the world of residues, the remnants of the bourgeois world. This structure can also be used to understand the possible commonality between the

differentiated man and what Evola calls “men of Tradition”. Those men, being at top of a differentiated hierarchy, also had no or very little external support, so they needed to find that support in the root of their Self and in that way follow only their “inner law”. They also needed this kind of Self in order to pass various initiatory trials and to generally live “more than life” which the whole traditionally ordered system depended on.

Evola’s structure of the Self can be considered a product of the “kernelization” he was probably forced to do because of his deep existential crisis and general inability and unwillingness to conform to the bourgeois world of his time. In this situation one is forced to define what one really is in the most general terms, but without losing on effectiveness of this conception in the world. In this context being loyal to the root of the Self seems to be the only way to function.

Evola in Ride the Tiger relies on various ideas from traditional teachings in order to define various features of this Self. One of them is ability to act without desire and the other one is ability to act without acting. Both features can only be realized by the Self which is structured hierarchically where parts on the higher level have ability to be loosely coupled or not fully attached to parts which are more specific and tied to particular job at hand. The parts of the higher level need to ensure that particular job is done in a way which is consistent with the nature of the Self contained in it’s root. He writes:

*The character of the human type I have been describing must result in a certain orientation whose essence was defined in*

*the traditional world by two basic maxims. The first of these is to act without regard to the fruits, without being affected by the chances of success or failure, victory or defeat, winning or losing … This form of action has also been called "action without desire". … the second traditional maxim, which is that of "action without acting". … describing a form of action that does not involve or stir the higher principle of "being" in itself. Yet the latter remains the true subject of the action, giving it its primary motive force and sustaining and guiding it from beginning to end.*

He calls general way of acting of the differentiated man Dionysian Apollonism. It is an approach in which this man opens himself to all experiences without crashing, no matter how destructive they might be. Structure of his Self supports this approach because failures on the individual level do not affect the root of the Self. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

*This serves as a preliminary to our real intention, which can only concern a "Dionysism" that is integrated, as one might say, with Apollonism. Here one possesses the stability that is the result of the Dionysian experience not as a goal before oneself, but in a certain sense behind oneself. Or else we can speak of a "Dionysian Apollonism", and define in these terms one of the most important ingredients of the attitude of the modern human type in his encounter with existence, beyond special domain of his trials.*

He introduces related idea of lucid inebriation to define the same approach. Every action of the differentiated man involves

parallel process on two levels of abstraction. The process on the higher level has the feature of detachment while processes on the lower level are fully involved even in the most problematic aspects of the world in dissolution. He writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *Moreover, the capacity to open oneself without losing oneself takes on a special importance in an epoch of dissolution. It is the way to master every transformation that may occur, even the most perilous ones. … Detachment coexists with a fully lived experience; a calm "being" is constantly wedded to the substance of life. … In this very special inebriation, subtilized and clarified, is to be seen the vital element necessary for an existence in the free state, in a chaotic world abandoned to itself.*

How can a man prove that he is differentiated, that he matches Evola's concept of the differentiated man? In order to answer this question Evola in Ride the Tiger introduces trials of self-knowledge which need to be passed in order for this man to prove his differentiation. There are two degrees of these trials. First degree is related to being oneself. This trial is passed when all parts of the Self are unified with some principle which is supposed to represent one's "nature". This unification is done experimentally through trial and error. This way a man is already differentiated compared to many of his contemporaries because in the world left to itself most of them have Self which is divided with many divergent tendencies. Evola writes:

> *With regard to the first degree, we have already noted the difficulty, especially in our times, that the principle of being*

*oneself encounters in the vast majority of individuals given their lack of a basic unity or even of one predominant and constant tendency among a multitude of others.*

Having passed this trial a man faces few problems. Why did not he choose some other principle with which he unified his Self? Were his experiments good enough? In the world left to itself, which does not contain any external “sign” which might suggest the right course of action, there is no way to fully resolve the question of meaning by just being something consistently. He might be just coping with some false identity or confusing fanaticism with “being oneself”. He never knows that some experience which awaits him won’t force him to change his principle, which can put the Self in the unstable and dysfunctional state.

In order to truly resolve the question of meaning in the meaningless world this man has to pass second degree trial of self-knowledge. Only then will he be able to be something, but in a way that he is sure that he cannot be any other way. During this trial, which also has experimental nature, he has to prove that unification and transformation of parts of his Self on the individual level are always done by using the feature of transcendence which exists in the root of the Self. In order to prove that this is the case, that the root of his Self really contains this feature, he has to intentionally discard his current principle, turn to some other principle, but without the Self crashing. He can only survive that crisis if his Self is centered around it’s root which has transcendence as a main feature, because only in this

case will the Self be able to rebuild parts on the individual level around the new principle. After passing this trial he should be able to survive transformations of all kinds, even the radical ones, without compromising the Self as a whole. Evola calls this ability transcendent confidence, a kind of confidence which enables one to be sure that even in a world completely left to itself, one cannot do anything which is not consistent with the root of the Self. He writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *This brings us to the consideration of the second degree of the trial through self-knowledge, which belongs to the transcendent dimension and which conditions the final solution of the existential problem. With the first degree, in fact, with the recognition of "one's own nature" and the making of one's own law, this problem is only resolved partially, on the formal plane. … When the situation remains at this stage, one is active in wanting to be oneself, but not with regard to the fact of being thus and not otherwise. … It is then that he must undergo the second degree of self-proving, which is like an experimental proof of the presence within him, in greater or lesser measure, of the higher dimension of transcendence. … It depends on this last trial to resolve, or not to resolve, the problem of the ultimate meaning of existence in an ambience lacking any support or "sign". After the whole superstructure has been rejected or destroyed, and having for one's sole support one's own being, the ultimate meaning of existing and living can spring only from a direct and absolute relationship between that being (between what*

*one is in a limiting sense) and transcendence (transcendence in itself).*

Results of the second trial have always been undetermined, even in the world of Tradition which provided support for this purpose. This is a trial which can lead to total collapse of the Self because it is hard to see how effects of inability of handling the abyss of nothingness one has to face when changing a principle one is attached to, can be easily reverted. By defining passing of this trial as a crucial prerequisite for being a differentiated man, Evola lifted the bar very high, because the radical nature of this trial makes it probably out of reach for those who might otherwise consider themselves differentiated. On the other hand, in a world as heavily struck by dissolution as is the case with the latest version of the bourgeois world, there is no other choice than to pass this trial for those who cannot cope with illusions of this world. Evola adds:

*The result of trials or experiences of this kind remains undetermined, and has always been so, even when the ultimate consecration of inner sovereignty was sought within the institutional frameworks provided by Tradition. It is all the more so in today's social climate, in circumstances where it is almost impossible to create a magical circle of protection in this confrontation with transcendence, with that which is in fact not human.*

This structure of the differentiated man's Self enables him to apply laws of cause and effect in the metaphysical domain, for his own and actions of others. He knows himself and he did it by

proving himself, so there are two possibilities in every action. He can be himself, in which case he did the Right Thing or he can not be himself, in which case he made an error or mistake. This way he operates in the domain beyond good and evil. Some mistakes can be fixed, while others cannot, but all actions are initially free from the idea of good and evil, and therefore also of the idea of sin. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *Thus for the moral concept of "sin" he substitutes the objective one of "fault", or more precisely "error". For him who has centered himself in transcendence, the idea of "sin" has not more sense than the current and vacillating notions of good and evil.*

In the context of the structure of the Self Evola also defined the difference between the person and the individual. Person's Self has root, while individual's Self does not. Both wear "masks", but "mask" of the individual is closed to the "above", having no link to the root of the Self. "Mask" of the person is the expression of the root of the Self. Evola on that basis defines the difference between the bourgeois world and the world of Tradition. First one is populated by individuals, while the second one is populated by persons.

In the same context he defines two kinds of impersonality and therefore two ways to transcend everything which is subjective in the bourgeois world. One is oriented upward, and the other downward. One has the limit in the absolute person of the world of Tradition, while the other has limit in the atomized individual who operates on level even lower than "values of

personality” of the bourgeois world. First kind of impersonality is one of the crucial features of the world of Tradition which is made of “anonymous heroes”. This is a world of differentiated typicality which gets manifested in caste systems of each upward civilizational cycle. Second kind of impersonality can be found in anti-traditional regimes of proletarian or consumer masses. It is the world of undifferentiated typicality or horizontal typicality which is one of the main causes of dysfunctionality of these regimes.

# Nietzsche’s Pseudosolution

Julius Evola was like many of his contemporaries heavily influenced by Nietzsche from an early age. In his intellectual autobiography he confirms that he spent many hours in the library reading Nietzsche’s works as a teenage boy. What influenced him the most in this period was Nietzsche’s anti-Christian position. He returned to some of these ideas during his phase of Pagan Imperialism, and finished his career with his book Ride the Tiger, large parts of which are devoted to the concept of the differentiated man who is supposed to avoid negative aspects of Nietzsche’s idea of the superman, which Evola believed greatly contributed to his personal collapse. He considered Nietzsche as a symbolic figure of the whole age of European nihilism. In Ride the Tiger he writes:

> *For the symbolic expression of the complex process that has led to the present situation of crisis in matters of morals and the vision of life, the best formulation is that of Nietzsche: “God is dead”. For our purposes, we can take Nietzsche’s theme as our point of departure, because it has lost nothing of its validity and relevance. It has been rightly said that Nietzsche’s personality and thought also have a symbolic character.*

In Ride the Tiger he uses Nietzsche’s idea of “God is dead” as a foundation for many other ideas related to the differentiated man. He writes:

*The significance of all the crises of recent times can be summarized as follows: a man wanted to be free, for whom a life of freedom could spell only ruin. To say "God is dead" is only an emotional way of stating the basic fact of the epoch … A famous passage of Zarathustra gives the most pregnant formulation of the essence of the crisis. "You call yourself free? Let me hear your ruling thoughts, and not that you have escaped bondage." …*

One way of looking at Nietzsche from Evola's perspective is that he was potentially differentiated man who failed to prove that he is differentiated. In Ride the Tiger Evola uses this as an example of the scenario which will occur to all those who face the nihilism of living without external support unprepared. It is Nietzsche's inability to center his Self around its root or to move this root into the transcendent dimension, which Evola thought is the main cause of Nietzsche's downfall. His writings suggest that transcendent dimension got activated in him, but he was not able control this "more than life" of "living dangerously". Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

*Life and transcendence are continually muddled in his philosophy, and of all the consequences of his anti-Christian polemic, this confusion has been one of the worst. He characterizes the values negated by Christian ideals – the ideals of the pariah, the chandala – and which supposedly constitute the opposite, affirmative, antinihilistic ideals, as follows: "dignity, distance, great responsibility … then he enumerates among the positive passions "pride, happiness,*

*health, …". The muddle is evident; it is a confusion of the sacred and the profane.*

In addition to that, Evola considered Nietzsche's idea of the superman as easily questionable from the perspective of true nihilism. The idea that humanity should devote itself to achieving the ideal of the superman in the future can be considered coping similar to coping present in ideas of Marxist-communist eschatology. These deficiencies are clear when viewed from the perspective of Evola's concept of the differentiated man which has no aspects related to "becoming". Differentiated man has inborn differentiating abilities which he can potentially first make stronger and then use for resolving the question of meaning in the world of meaninglessness. All aspects of this idea are related to "being", not "becoming".

Nietzsche's experience of transcendence is for Evola passive. He opened up his Self to all experiences, but was not able to live through them consistently. In Evola's conception of the Self he developed for the differentiated man, the only way this can be done is if the root of the Self has ability of transcendence and is therefore able to integrate those often chaotic and destructive experiences consistently using this ability. He writes in Ride the Tiger:

*The cutting of all bonds, the intolerance of all limits, the pure and incoercible impulse to overcome without any determined goal, to always move on beyond any given state, experience, or idea, and naturally and even more beyond any human attachment to a given person, fearing neither contradictions*

*nor destructions … - these essential characteristics that some have already recognized in Nietzsche can be explained precisely as so many forms in which the transcendent acts and manifests. But the fact that this is not recognized and admitted as such, the fact, therefore, that this energy remains in the closed circle of immanence and of "life", generates a higher voltage than the circuit can sustain. This fact, moreover, may be the true and deeper cause of the final collapse of Nietzsche the man.*

Evola expands on this collapse of Nietzsche by claiming that aside from the very different approach of the differentiated man, a man with very different constitution, there are cases in which those who decided to follow the way of immanence are able to resolve the problem of meaning by "sudden illumination", a conscious change of polarity. He writes:

*Once they have entered on the way of absolute affirmation, and have mastered all those forms of "ascesis" and the activation of a higher intensity of life … ,their only saving solution is in a conscious change of polarity … their life would be turned upside down, as it were, and transformed into a different quality – the mehr lebel [living more] would give place to a mehr-als-leben [more than living].*

Evola's critique of Nietzsche's attempt to go beyond zero point of values can be summarized by Nietzsche's inability to use transcendence actively or his Self lacking structure which has transcendence as its main feature. This is what caused Nietzsche

to mix transcendent and naturalistic ideas in descriptions of his more than living. Evola writes in Ride the Tiger:

> *No less evident is the solution given by turning the tragic and absurd vision of life into its opposite. Nietzsche's solution of the problem of the meaning of life, consisting in the affirmation that this meaning does not exist outside of life, and that life in itself is meaning (from which derive all the themes already mentioned, including the myth of the eternal return), is valid only on the presupposition of a being that has transcendence as its existential component.*

Although Evola's critique of Nietzsche deals with very fundamental flaws in his idea of the superman, he considered many other Nietzsche's ideas positive and useful for the differentiated man, which is the only kind of man he addresses in Ride the Tiger. For Evola "God is dead" idea can be viewed as one of the main signs of the process of dissolution. It is God of bourgeois moralism which is dead, not the God of the world of Tradition. He also elaborates on the "beyond good and evil" idea. For the differentiated man all actions are inherently free from both good and evil. There are only causes and effects, among which there are also mistakes, but there are no sins. Probably in order to show his general appreciation of Nietzsche's idea of the superman, Evola in Ride the Tiger writes a long passage which enumerates all positive aspects of this idea. He writes:

> *All the positive aspects of the way of the superman belong to this second aspect: the power to make a law for oneself, the "power to refuse and not to act, when one is pressed to*

*affirmation by a prodigious force and an enormous tension … - all these are the positive elements that the man of Tradition also makes his own, but which are only comprehensible and attainable when "life" is "more than life", that is, through transcendence. They are values attainable only by those in whom there is something else, and something more, than mere life.*

# Existentialism – Philosophy of Crisis

Julius Evola was not a big fan of existentialist philosophy. In Ride the Tiger he forces himself to deal with it in order to show that this philosophy as a whole should be very alien to the differentiated man, a kind of man which he addresses in this book. By using existentialism as a counterexample, he probably tried to strengthen his message. Existentialists deal with similar issues, and sometimes even come up with interesting ones, as Evola deals with in his concept of the differentiated man, but in general most of that should be rejected by this kind of man. He writes:

> *This confirms the fundamental difference between the human type who finds his reflection in existential philosophy, and the one who still preserves, as an indelible character, the substance of the man of Tradition. Existentialism is a projection of modern man in crisis, rather than of modern man beyond crisis.*

He detects the root cause of these differences in the nature of existentialists. These are generally professors or armchair intellectuals who are in their bourgeois existence far removed from men who experience effects of the dissolution in their existential reality. These men, although probably lacking in intellectual abilities, are in a better position to properly conceptualize their approach to survival in a world in crisis. In addition to that, existentialists are modern men completely unlinked from the world of Tradition. They operate in the realm

of unrealism of philosophy of the bourgeois era. That would not be a problem if resolving the crisis of meaning wouldn't depend on the adaptation of the traditional teachings relevant to the left-hand path, which Evola does in his concept of the differentiated man. These are the causes why existentialists are forced to use mostly incomprehensible language to deal with phenomena they have no real experience with. Evola writes:

> *Moreover, even when the existentialists partially follow the right path, it happens as if by chance, not based on sound principles but with inevitable waverings, omissions, and confusions, and above all in a state of internal surrender. Worse yet, philosophical existentialists use an arbitrary terminology that they have specially invented, and which, especially in Heidegger, is of an inconceivable abstruseness, both superfluous and intolerable.*

One of the ideas which existentialists touch on, probably by chance, and which are aligned with traditional teachings, is the idea of preexistence. This idea states that root of the Self has features which one dedicates to and accepts in the pretemporal domain, beyond current earthly existence. In that sense every individual has two heredities, one terrestrial and the other superterrestrial. This also means that one comes into this world from afar with well defined features and abilities, which one can be loyal or disloyal to. For Evola this idea represents one of the crucial ingredients for living differentiated life in the world left to itself. But for existentialists, although they deal with the idea

of the fundamental project, this represents a horrible limitation. Evola writes:

> *Now, we have seen that existentialism often exhibits a presentiment of this ancient truth, giving rise either to the anguishing sensation of an insuperable limitation that is obscure if not absurd, or else to the abdication and retreat into a creatural attitude in a more or less religious sense. In the differentiated type who interests us, on the contrary, the same presentiment can only act as it has always acted in the upper strata of the traditional world, being a most essential part of the attitude required for staying on one's feet and "riding the tiger."*

In failure of existentialist philosophy to properly adapt traditional idea of preexistence Evola saw one of the main reasons why this philosophy can be considered a true philosophy of crisis. If the Self is an entity which exists only in time and lacks inherent feature of transcendence, and is therefore closed in the vertical dimension, all its actions, although related to the fundamental project, are uncertain and lack real foundation, and all of that in world of pure contingency. Evola writes:

> *If I am nothing, if I lack a preexistent metaphysical basis, if I only am if that mere project of myself becomes realized, evidently I exist in time, wherein that actuation of my project of being will unfold – or not, as the case may be. Thus the eventual process of "transcendence" envisaged by this type of existentialism is purely horizontal, not vertical in character. …*

*Given this anguished resort to becoming for the source of one's being, and also given the recognition of the insignificance of "inauthentic" existence in a life that is socialized, superficial, and anodyne, we have evidently reached the extreme limit of a true "philosophy of crisis", which we could have included among the varieties of modern nihilism.*

Commenting on the idea of the fundamental project of Sartre, Evola adds:

*Sartre even says drastically that any particular use of that inescapable freedom, whether in voluntary or passionate, rational or irrational decisions, occurs "when the bets are already laid." Thus he compares the original choice to the act of throwing the ball onto the roulette wheel, an act with which everything is already potentially decided. We therefore face a curious contrast between two distinct themes: that of formless freedom having nothingness as its basis, and that of a species of destiny, a primal determination that basically annuls the former or renders it as illusory as ever. This mirrors an inner sensation typical of a period of dissolution.*

Evola pays special attention to Heidegger's idea of Dasein because it demonstrates fundamental differences in the structure of the Self between the differentiated man and a man who Heidegger writes about. Heidegger's Self does not contain the root, or Being in existentialist terminology. There exist Dasein (the "I") which is in its non-totality trying to reach totality, considering this as its duty, which is represented by Being,

although it can never really reach it while it is alive. In comparison, Evola's Self contains the root, which is situated in supra-individual and transcendent dimension. If there is something which can be conceived as "duty" in that case, it is a "duty" of this Self to be consistent with its root, but it is also free to be inconsistent. Evola writes:

> *The prospects could not be darker. Dasein, the I, which is nothing in itself, pursues being that is outside and before it, and thus runs through time, in the same dependent relationship as the thirsty man seeking water – with the difference that it is inconceivable that he will ever reach Being … The view of life in Heideggerian existentialism could well be characterized by Bernanos's expression: a retreat forward.*

He also comments on the idea of "responsibility" used by both Heidegger and Sartre. In their conception, Dasein is responsible for trying to reach totality while being burdened by the non-totality. These ideas reveal passive attitude toward freedom of men in the world left to itself. One finds himself in this world, but with no idea in which direction to go. If, as is the case for the differentiated man, one's Self has structure which ensures the essential direction, the idea of "responsibility" seems irrelevant since it is this essential direction which determines nature of one's actions, not a feeling of "duty" or "responsibility" toward something external. Evola adds:

> *As for the emotional tone, it amounts to feeling absolute freedom not as a victory, but as a burden. … Moreover, the introduction of the concept of responsibility already reveals*

*one of the principal flaws of all existentialism: to whom is one responsible? … One finds oneself already faced with the well-known situation of a freedom that is suffered, rather than claimed, modern man is not free, but finds himself free in the world where God is dead.*

Where existentialism differs the most from the attitude of the differentiated man, is in the question of death. Heidegger considers death as event which ends the non-totality of Dasein. In this conception one should feel anguish in the face of death, and if that's not the case, this the sign of inauthenticity. For Evola this is incredibly strange idea, no matter how much it might be applicable to last men of the world in dissolution. In comparison, for differentiated man death is the event when the state of the Self changes in a radical way, and although it represents the end of parts existing on the individual level, it does not touch the root of the Self, so anguish should not be a feeling differentiated man should feel when facing this event.

# Neospiritualism – Fissures in the Great Wall

Although Julius Evola dealt with neospiritualism at length in a separate book titled The Face and Mask of Contemporary Spiritualism, which was published in early 1930s, he returned to this topic in his book Ride the Tiger. Many of his positions did not change during the span of 30 years which separates those two books. In other topics which do not concern the differentiated man directly, he deals with neospiritualism as a negative phenomena typical of every end of the cycle, which can demonstrate what he did not mean by his concept of the differentiated man. In Ride the Tiger, instead of "neospiritualism", he also uses the term "second religiosity" which he borrowed from Spengler.

Neospiritualism parallels the end of the bourgeois era of materialism, scientism and rationalism. It almost always opposes the dominant religion in crisis, which is mostly Christianity, and appears attractive to last men, who are fully unequipped to deal with "spiritual" issues, in search of a solution to the problem of meaning in the meaningless world. Although it mostly pretends that it is bringing new light to the world of darkness, from the traditional perspective neospiritualism is oriented downward, toward subterrestrial domain. Evola writes:

> *According to Spengler, one of the phenomena that consistently accompanies the terminal phase of civilization is the "second*

*religiosity." On the fringes of structures of barbaric grandeur – rationalism, practical atheism, and materialism – there spring up sporadic forms of spirituality and mysticism, even irruptions from the supersensible, which do not indicate a re-ascent but are symptoms of decay.*

Agreeing with Guenon's take on these phenomena, Evola considers them even more problematic than materialism of yesterday's bourgeois world. This world closed off men to the above, giving them some kind of temporary security, while the world of neospiritualism in addition to that opened up men to bellow. Evola adds:

*Guenon has stated that after nineteenth-century materialism and positivism had closed man off to what was effectively above him – the truly supernatural, the transcendent – the many twentieth-century currents appearing under the guise of "spirituality" or "new psychology" tended to open him up to that which was beneath him … One might also use an expression of Aldous Huxley, who speaks of a "self-transcendence downwards" as opposed to a "self-transcendence upwards."*

For many decades neospiritualism spread like a plague all over the world, to all parts where dominant religion of the previous era was in crisis. It started as a trend on the edges of society, affecting only weirdos, and then it continued its development toward the status of a hobby or coping mechanism of many sophisticated last men of the consumer bourgeoisie. From the perspective of progressives and even

some of the “right-wingers”, if one is Christian, no matter how watered down that term is, one is a non-spiritual weirdo, while if one is spiritual, that almost certainly means that one is not Christian. Evola considered these “spiritual” pretenses of neospiritualism as pure illusion. He writes:

> *They have common ambition to supply Western man with something more than the forms of positive and dogmatic religion, reckoned inadequate, empty, and inefficient, and to lead him beyond materialism. This too is an illusion, caused by the lack of principles so typical of our contemporaries.*

Proper description of neospiritualism is a feminine spirituality, typical of all gynocratic cycles in history. Evola adds:

> *In another respect, nothing is more indicative of the level of this neospiritualism than the human material of the majority of those who cultivate it. While the ancient sciences had the prerogative of a superior humanity drawn from the royal and priestly castes, today’s anti-materialist gospel is bandied about by mediums, popular “maguses”, dowsers, … Mystification and superstition are constantly mingled in neospiritualism, another of whose typical traits, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, is the high percentage of women (women who are failures, dropouts, or “past it”).*

It is hard to separate from that most developments in still dominant religion, the Christianity, which in its impotence and feminine tendencies could soon become a candidate for the inclusion in neospiritualistic currents. This could signify the end

of religion which from the traditional perspective had serious shortcomings from the very beginning. Evola writes:

> *… an important factor has been the mutilated character of Christianity when compared to the majority of other traditional forms; mutilated, because it does not possess an "esotericism", an inner teaching of a metaphysical character beyond the truths and dogmas of the faith offered to the common people.*

Neospiritualism will certainly continue to develop into more dominant and problematic forms as the West and increasingly the rest of the world enters new phases of more advanced kinds of gynocracies. Polycrisis of 2020s has, with its various destructions, the potential not just to end the bourgeois era, but also turn last men and women toward what's beneath them, the subterrestrial world, as the basic survival gets increasingly problematic in a totally bankrupt world. Evola uses a compelling idea of Guenon to describe what awaits the world in dissolution:

> *Here one may well speak, with Guenon, of "fissures in the Great Wall", dangerous faults in that protecting barrier that, despite everything, protects every normal and sound-minded person in ordinary life from the action of genuine dark forces … From this point of view, neospiritualism appears even more dangerous than materialism or positivism, whose primitivity and intellectual myopia at least serve to reinforce the "wall" which, while limiting, also protects.*

It is legitimate to include attempts at spiritualization of modern science into the larger phenomena of neospiritualism. The idea that modern science outgrew its crude beginnings of positivism and materialism, and is now after updating its theories and methods, able to deal with metaphysical phenomena, is getting increasingly popular. In that context this science is increasingly treated as a religion, which is able to not just replace, but as is always the case in subversive movements, to even improve religions of the barbaric past. Evola writes:

> *All these are only developments of one of the great illusions of the modern world, one of the mirages of an epoch in which, in reality, the dissolving processes have besieged the field of knowledge itself. In order to realize this, it is enough to look beyond the façade. If it is not a matter of popularizers, but of the scientists themselves, and if it is not a cases like the knowing smiles between mystifying augurs, which Cicero speaks of, it reveals a naivete that only an unequaled limitation of horizons and intellectual interests could explain.*

In reality this science, despite developing new and updating old theories, and contributing to advancement in the field of technology, which is in majority of cases driven by making already easy life of consumer bourgeoisie even easier, is unable to make phenomena in the physical world more comprehensible. In many cases old theories, although being limited by crude materialism, appear to be more comprehensible than the new ones. In this sense, despite all efforts of popularizers of science, it remains the interest of

either specialists of particular scientific fields or a distraction for brainy people who like to feel smarter than others. Almost nothing has changed in the existential reality of both those men and those who ignore science either because it looks unapproachable or because they sense that it represents the construction of brainy people wanting to dominate nature, make more money or show that they are smart. Evola writes:

> *I will repeat that it is a fraud to speak of a spiritual value in today's science, just because instead of matter, it talks about energy, or because it sees mass of "coagulated radiations" or a sort of "congealed light", and because it considers spaces of more than three dimensions. None of that has any existence outside the theories of specialists in purely abstract mathematical notions. When these notions are substituted for those of earlier physics, they change nothing of modern man's effective experience of the world.*

Evola clarifies that there is a value, and even a "spiritual" value in the scientific method, which with its impersonal and objective approach fits many characteristics of traditional approach to intellectual and spiritual activity. Unfortunately, this cannot turn scientists, men who are even more struck by dissolution than non-thinking men, into men who are able to transcend all the negative effects of radically anti-traditional environment.

Evola acknowledges the fact that the dissolution first started in the West, so in that sense it is understandable that neospiritualism developed almost exclusively by faulty

adaptations of Eastern spiritual traditions. Those who were coping with the idea of "traditional East" which can help the West recover from dissolution, if they haven't already, will soon be unable to cope because non-Western parts of the world have managed to modernize themselves in a period of several decades, which took the West several centuries to achieve. Recent idea that Russia or China as radically anti-traditional partners of global American anti-empire, after first living through decades of communism and then few decades of consumerism, are able to represent shining beacons of spirituality in the new multipolar world, can also be included in probably the most extreme forms of neospiritualism.

Evola treats neospiritualism from the perspective of somebody who was considered, even by those who wouldn't agree with his political or other views, as expert on inner doctrines. Having written several books on the topic, and as suggested by few personal informations which he shared with his readers, practiced many of these doctrines, Evola knows what he is talking about. Therefore, one should take very seriously reservations he had regarding possibilities of self-initiation in the world left to itself. He writes:

> *Well then, if initiation is taken in its highest, metaphysical sense, one must assume a priori that it is not even a hypothetical possibility in an epoch like the present, in an environment like the one we live in, and also given the general inner formation of individuals (now feeling the fatal effect of a collective ancestry that for centuries has been absolutely*

*unfavorable). Anyone who sees things differently either does not understand the matter, or else is deceiving himself and others.*

In The Path of Cinnabar, his intellectual autobiography, while giving some hints on how to read his books, he adds:

*As for most of my other books dealing with various "inner" or "esoteric" traditional doctrines, they should be read for the sole purpose of broadening one's intellectual horizons, and certainly not in the foolish hope of achieving any of the goals they describe – goals that, even in times more favorable than our own, were only achieved in extraordinary circumstances by individuals who possessed highly uncommon personal qualifications.*

Therefore, it is a mistake to confuse Evola's concept of the differentiated man with his works on inner doctrines. This man cannot emulate what was proper path of very unusual men of Tradition in much more favorable times. Differentiated man can in that context be viewed as a man who by using his ability of transcendence has to invent his own ways to deal with the world in dissolution, which are by definition because of their relationships with the left-hand path, if not inferior, then certainly very different from right-hand approach of those living in the world of Tradition.

# Fear of Death – Beyond Current Earthly Existence

Julius Evola considered the problem of death as first-class philosophical problem. In Ride the Tiger he devoted, maybe even because of that, to this problem the last chapter of the book. Participation in both world wars, in one of them as a combatant, and in the other as an active non-combatant, qualifies Evola to philosophize about death much more than many people living in the bourgeois world of today, the consumer-bourgeois world. As a young man he miraculously avoided suicide during the deep existential crisis, and he was very close to dying when he was hurt during the Allied bombing in Vienna at the end of the Second World War.

In this last chapter he deals with various kinds of deaths. In the world left to itself, in addition to death in comforts of the consumer-bourgeois world, there is certainly high probability of dying if not in the context of nuclear apocalypse, then from usage of other weapons of mass destruction. In this world which is basically broke for many years, there is also a possibility of dying from all sorts of black swans which are designed to cover up the Reset which the world needs. There is nothing that's not risky at the very end of the cycle. Evola agrees with Jünger that experience of modern warfare can be used as a challenge by the differentiated man (The Worker in Jünger's case). Can he take lethal blows without being destroyed? The

answer exists in fault-tolerance and robustness of his Self. Evola writes:

> *In the material battle, in which technology seems to turn against man with its systematic destruction and its activation of elementary forces, the individual as combatant cannot face it without being blown apart – not only physically but spiritually – unless he passes into a new form of existence. … What is important here is natural union of life with risk, beyond the instinct of self-preservation, including situations in which one's own physical destruction is parallel to the attainment of the absolute sense of existence, and actualizes the "absolute person". We might call this ultimate case of "riding the tiger".*

In all of these cases differentiated man should not fear death. For him death is the event which causes radical change in the state of his Self. There is no doubt that some parts of his Self, those situated on the individual level will die in a material sense, but it is up to him to be confident enough in a transcendent sense to face this event with the assurance that as a whole his Self won't die. Death should be faced like any other event he faces in the world left to itself – as a challenge for his Self to stay differentiated. Evola writes:

> *He can then consider a particular "contemplation of death" as a positive factor, as a challenge, and as a measure of his inner strength. He can also follow the well-known ancient maxim of considering every day as the last of his individual existence: at the prospect, not only should he maintain his calm, but he*

*should not even change anything in his thinking or acting. … The positive contemplatio mortis, to which I referred, no longer gives importance to staying alive or not, and leaves death behind one, so to speak, without being paralyzed by it. On the contrary: from this point one should enter into a higher, exalted, free form of living, carried by a sort of magical, lucid intoxication.*

Compared to the typically bourgeois approach to death of his contemporaries, this approach is already differentiated, although he can never be sure that he will do what he is supposed to do when the event od death occurs. It can be said that fear of death is one of the main drivers of the bourgeois era and all types of bourgeois man who live in it. Being closed to the above, or not having the ability of transcendence, but being left to his own devices, is the source of most illusions of the bourgeois world. From the point of view of this man, if event of death represents The End, then no higher authority is supposed to limit his inborn materialism neither in the context of enlightened self-interest nor in the context of "noble" tendencies to create earthly paradise of worldwide proletarians or consumers. Incredible void is hidden behind these tendencies which Evola deals with in other chapters of Ride the Tiger. The only way to deal with this void is in the context of traditional structures which contain special kind of men, priests and warriors, who each in their own way, do not fear death. If this crucial element is missing, no matter how smart, every movement or ideology will fall short, because in the final

analysis, what is the purpose of any kind of “god” if we are going to die in the end?

Only those who are not afraid of death can be really free. This is a rule which got implemented in various ways in every upward civilizational cycle. Every environment which is free from bourgeois super-structures and contains differentiation of energies between men will naturally gravitate toward the order which will consider only that kind of men free. One of the root causes of dissolution can be explained by illusory attainment of freedom of those men for whom it means only ruin. There is no way for this man to avoid serious and unfixable mistakes in a “free” state, because his actions and view of the world are always constrained by his fear of death. He might not always do the “wrong thing”, but will never do The Right Thing, and in many cases anything less than The Right Thing is not good enough, not just for bourgeois survival, but for survival in the most basic sense.

Recent black swans of the polycrisis of the 2020s, especially the C-19 have shown the significance of the fear of death. Technocrats of the world were able to lock up billions of consumers worldwide for years with almost no, and certainly no serious resistance. This could be regarded as one of the best displays of power ever done. On the other hand, it represents the final proof that majority of individuals of worldwide consumer bourgeoisie simply cannot be free. This kind of man who with no resistance accepted to be locked up while mostly thinking that this is for his own good, can be used as an

antithesis of the free man of the old world. This is one of the things which should have been done by “the Right”, instead of production of endless conspiracy theories and references to the good old days of the bourgeois world of yesterday.

Evola in Ride the Tiger introduces the idea of pre-existence which he borrowed from traditional teachings. This idea suggests that earthly existence is just one interval in the continuum. Lifetime of the Self is not restricted to the current earthly existence. This perspective should be natural to the differentiated man. It has to be very clear to him in an existentially relevant way that the root of his Self existed even before he was born and will exist after he dies. This is more or less immutable constant which he can always rely on before, during and after this earthly existence. Evola writes:

> *There is one factor that positively undramatizes the idea of death: it is that mentioned when speaking of the traditional doctrine of pre-existence. The differentiated man cannot think that his being begins with his physical, corporeal birth, and ends with his death. However, he can neither make the beyond the center of gravity of his life, as in the religious theory of salvation, nor can he regard terrestrial existence as the mere ascetic preparation for death.*

From the technical perspective differentiated man’s Self has a structure which should be able to handle the dramatic event such as death. If the root of this Self really has the ability of transcendence, then it should be able to survive literal crash of all its parts which exist on its individual level. Evola adds:

*However, any change of state involves a crisis; only the traditional view mentioned earlier can completely eliminate the problematic nature of the beyond and the event of death itself. … Through this, one should benefit from all the recommendations in the preceding pages, recommendations that can then be as valid beyond life as they are for life in the current epoch. Last but not least, they include the disposition of being ready "to bear lethal blows on one's own being without being destroyed."*

At the end of the chapter on death Evola deals with suicide. Given his differentiation, are there circumstances in which the differentiated man can take his own life? After, as is usually the case for Evola, looking at this questions from multiple points of view, often bringing in perspective of traditional teachings, he relies on the doctrine of pre-existence to conclude that there are no circumstances in which this man should consider suicide. He committed himself in the pretemporal domain, beyond current earthly existence, to the set of fundamental features, including the feature of transcendence, which are contained in the root of his Self, so by taking his own life he would interfere with this decision. Although life at the end of the cycle will unavoidably mean many crises and destructions, he is supposed to actively use his ability of transcendence to ensure that in all of these circumstances the root of the Self will stay untouched, which means that his actions irrespective of the environment in which they occur, will reflect what he is really about. Evola writes:

*… if one holds on to the idea that whatever one is as a person in the human condition proceeds from an original, prenatal, and pretemporal choice … it is no longer a matter of answering to a Creator, but to something referring to the very dimension of being or transcendence in oneself. … As in an adventure, a mission, a trial, an election, or an experiment, earthly life appears to be something to which one committed oneself before finding oneself in the human condition, accepting in anticipation whatever difficult, miserable, or dramatic aspects it might bring, aspects that are especially likely in an epoch like the present.*